MENSHEVISM VERSUS BOLSHEVISM

S.U. 643 Ge. 668 Georgia was for Stalin not only the homeland where his first political notions were formed, but also the scene of those of his political triumphs which had been the most difficult to achieve. The saying that a prophet has no honour in his own country applies fully to Stalin.

Stalin's attitude towards Tiflis is in many ways comparable to Hitler's attitude towards Vienna. Hitler disliked Vienna because he considered that city was not sufficiently German and too polyglot. Stalin hated Tiflis because of its petty bourgeois atmosphere and the absence of sharp class conflicts. Vienna offered no scope to Hitler and forced him to seek his luck in Germany. For Stalin, Tiflis was tantamount to failure. In Tiflis Stalin found a strongly developed Georgian nationalism preventing the unfolding of an internationalist revolutionary working-class movement such as Bolshevism wanted to be at the beginning of the century. Having recognized that Tiflis and the whole of Georgia were a rather hopeless ground for his activities Stalin left the field to the Georgian Mensheviks, a popular socialist party with deep roots in the national traditions. He went to Baku, which became the capital of the Transcaucasian revolutionary movement.

S.U. 643 Ge. 665 The day of revenge came. Just as Hitler entered Vienna as conqueror on March 12th, 1938, Stalin entered Tiflis in the middle of July 1921 not as a Georgian, but as the representative of the Moscow central power. For three years little Georgia had succeeded in keeping outside Soviet control. From the Russian October Revolution onwards until the proclamation of the Georgian Soviet Republic on February 25th, 1921, Georgia was not just a little recalcitrant Caucasus Republic, a 'Menshevik Vendée' braving Bolshevik Moscow, but the symbol of the struggle between World Bolshevism and international Social Democracy. Social Democrats of Western Europe looked with hope and almost with pride towards Georgia. The leaders of the Second International went to Tiflis and returned to their respective countries greatly impressed by the achievements of the Georgian Menshevik Government. The chief theoretician of Social Democracy, Karl Kautsky, wrote an enthusiastic book, *Georgia – a Social Democratic Peasant Republic*, and the Belgian socialist leader Emile Vandervelde contributed a preface to a book on democratic Georgia by the Menshevik, Vladimir Voytinsky. Social democrats throughout the world seemed to indulge in a secret wish that small Menshevik Georgia would make a better case for socialism than large Bolshevik Russia. Social democrats also expected Georgia to demonstrate that the relationship between peasants and workers could be solved more satisfactorily by democratic means than by establishing the Bolshevik hegemony of the city proletariat over the rural

[Cf. category 175, p. 225 -- Analyst]